



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

for survivors of domestic and sexual violence

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Community Partners, Advocates and Friends,

The need in our community is very real. Right now, throughout Wood County, an increasing number of survivors – our friends, neighbors, co-workers and family members – are experiencing violence at the hands of someone they know.

Imagine living in constant fear and trying to decide when and how to leave an abusive home. How do you keep yourself and your children safe? Where do you go? Who is going to help you? Will anyone believe you?

Your support makes the difference in the lives of domestic abuse and sexual violence survivors every single day.

Our mission to provide safety, healing and justice is at the core of all we do, but it's not possible without your compassion and investment.

Our team of advocates works tirelessly 24/7 to ensure survivors can access the critical services they need to lead lives free from violence. It's all achieved through the dedication of our staff, volunteers, donors and supporters like you who give their time, money and voices to our critical work.

In 15 years of serving our community, we've evolved to meet the ever-changing needs of survivors.

Though it's taken years for us to grow from a 12-bed domestic violence shelter to a comprehensive domestic and sexual violence agency, our vision has remained steadfast – to be a trusted partner, community leader and transforming voice in Wood County and the surrounding areas, committed to ending violence and empowering those affected by abuse.

The year 2020 saw a record number of survivors reaching out for assistance, including emergency safe shelter, 24/7 crisis support, medical and legal advocacy, safety planning and children's support.

As we worked daily to support those in need, we heard the stories of fear, anxiety, shattered dreams, unsafe homes, broken bones, strangulation, nightmares and the daunting task of starting over. So, along with supporting survivors in their time of need, we began to focus on creating the social change necessary to prevent gender-based violence from occurring in our communities.

Several Cocoon staff earned Green Dot certification, learning the evidence-based model for preventing sexual and domestic violence. We also launched a program to provide prevention on the Bowling Green State University and Owens Community College campuses and throughout Wood County. Please reach out to learn more about our prevention initiatives. We would love to add you to the Green Dot family.

There is still a lot of work to be done, but we are building safe communities one step at a time and are proud to walk alongside you in this work.

Thank you for helping us empower survivors, raise their voices and move closer to violence free communities.

I am honored to be leading The Cocoon in this fight and I hope we will be a beacon of hope for families for many years to come.

In solidarity,

Kathy Mull, Executive Director

ADVOCACY *in action*

The Cocoon is Wood County's only comprehensive domestic and sexual violence agency providing 24/7 support, emergency shelter and community-based services.

We serve women, men and their children, and ours is one of the few agencies of its kind in the country to house family pets.

Last year, our team:

- Responded to more than **7,000** requests for services
- Served more than **700** survivors of domestic and sexual violence
- Housed nearly **100** individuals for an average of **57** nights each

Our individual programs and services are provided at no cost to survivors and their families throughout their lifetimes.

These services include:

- Food assistance
- Basic need assistance
- Case management
- Safety planning
- Medical advocacy
- Legal advocacy
- Support groups
- Campus-based advocacy
- Title IX navigation
- Alternative housing assistance



A History of The Cocoon's Impact on Our Community

Mission

The Cocoon provides safety, healing and justice across the lifespan for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, their children and all of those affected by abuse. We work to educate and increase awareness about abuse and commit to building a compassionate and safe community.

Vision

The Cocoon will be a trusted partner, community leader and transforming voice in Wood County and the surrounding areas. We are committed to empowering those affected by abuse and driving social change that leads to safety, justice, nonviolence and equity for all people.

- 2000**
 - Grassroots advocacy and community organizing occur through the BGSU Women's Center and Transformation Project to bring a shelter to Wood County.
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 - After 4 domestic violence homicides in as many years in Wood County, there is tremendous pressure to open an emergency shelter.
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- 2004**
 - A local property owner designates one of his properties for use by The Cocoon Shelter.
- 2005**
 - In June, The Cocoon Shelter opens and immediately starts providing services to those seeking emergency shelter.
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 - In May, Victims Services of Behavioral Connections transitions its non-residential domestic violence advocacy program to The Cocoon Shelter. All domestic violence survivors receive comprehensive services from one agency.
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- 2012**
 - In November, The Cocoon Shelter purchases a building with the vision of creating a larger capacity emergency shelter and comprehensive advocacy center.
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 - In the spring, The Cocoon Shelter changes its name to The Cocoon to signify that we provide more than just domestic violence emergency shelter services. A new logo, brand colors and mission statement are adopted at this time.
- 2014**
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- 2015**
 - On October 1, SAAFE Center moves its program to The Cocoon and we begin providing dual domestic and sexual violence services.
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- 2017**
 - In May, Phase I of renovations is completed and the new shelter facility opens, doubling the our capacity.
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 - The Cocoon operates as a comprehensive domestic and sexual violence agency, providing shelter and advocacy services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, stalking and to adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse.
- 2020**
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OUR PROGRAMS



Emergency Shelter

We provide short-term emergency shelter for up to 90 days. We house single women, single men, survivors with children and pets.



Prevention & Education

We offer outreach services to schools, organizations and companies, including educational presentations, professional speakers and training programs.



Crisis Support

The Cocoon advocates are available to assist survivors 24/7. We provide timely and empathetic responses assisting survivors from crisis to recovery.



Legal Access Program

Services include making connections with counsel, assisting with orders of protection, explaining proceedings and accompanying survivors to court and legal meetings.



Safe Pets Program

Survivors can bring their pets with them to the shelter, so they don't have to choose between protecting themselves and their animals.



Economic Empowerment

We provide survivors with the tools to create financial stability, including budgeting, credit repair, employment assistance and matched savings opportunities.



Transportation Service

We ensure that survivors have access to transportation in order to attend critical legal and medical appointments.



Children's Programming

We work to reduce the effects of trauma on children through on-site counseling, peer support and age-appropriate spaces and activities.



“The Cocoon saved my life.”

Cocoon advocates help survivors explore their options, navigate legal and medical channels and create safety plans to ensure that they and their children are provided with the protection and justice that everyone deserves.

The process often starts with the survivor’s call to our 24/7 crisis line, a critical link to speak directly with a trained advocate who will listen and provide encouragement and support.

Some callers may need help escaping their abuser as they are calling. Others may not be ready to leave, but want to discuss what their options are if they do. Whatever situation the survivor is in, our advocates are there to help.





Emergency Safe Shelter

Survivors, their children and even family pets are provided emergency safe shelter for up to 90 days.

Our space is designed to accommodate all survivors, regardless of gender or gender identity.

It's common for survivors to be dependent on their abusers, so our advocates work with residents to develop a sense of independence from the time they arrive, instilling a sense of self-confidence, self-worth and self-sufficiency that increases their chance for long-term success.

Safety planning is key to a survivor successfully removing themselves from an abusive situation. Every survivor's circumstances are unique, so Cocoon advocates work one-on-one with each individual to develop short and long-term safety plans and set goals for employment, housing, childcare and financial security.

Domestic Violence Advocacy

Advocates provide community and legal advocacy for survivors of domestic violence, including assistance with filing for a Civil Protection Order, explaining what to expect in court proceedings, detailing options for working with police, and providing resources for additional legal services, including divorce and custody, as well as personal advocacy, such as changing residence or safety planning.

Sexual Violence Advocacy

Advocates assist survivors experiencing sexual assault, sex trafficking and all other forms of sexual violence. We specialize in providing support during rape kit exams, navigating the criminal justice system and campus-based departments, as well as providing programs and services such as safety planning and case management.



BGSU®



Community Partnerships & Events

The Cocoon regularly partners with area businesses and organizations on prevention, education and outreach initiatives.

- **Wood County Museum's Mary and Carl Bach Exhibit**
This exhibit confronts the folklore surrounding the late 1800s murder of Mary Bach by her husband and explores how Mary's experiences mirror those of domestic violence survivors today.
- **Grounds for Thought Survivor Art Display**
The coffee shop featured survivor art in their store gallery in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
- **Children's Resource Center** is providing onsite counseling at The Cocoon to children who've witnessed or experienced violence.
- **A Renewed Mind** is providing onsite mental health and substance use services for survivors at The Cocoon.



Clothesline Project



What Were You Wearing

Prevention & Education

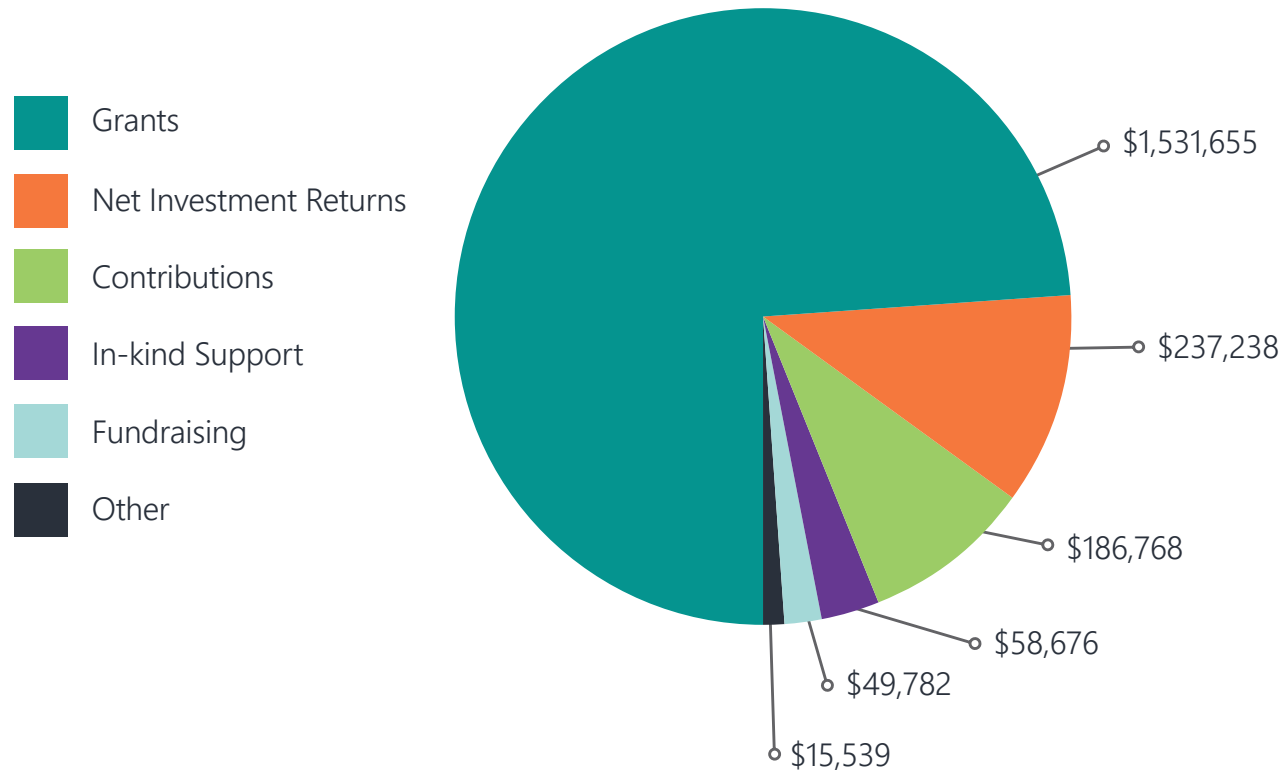
Breaking the cycle of domestic and sexual violence is critical in reducing victimization and trauma, and The Cocoon is proud to take a proactive approach to prevention. Since 2018, The Cocoon's Prevention Specialist has worked to develop curriculum and materials designed to educate the community on how to safely stop assaults. In 2019, we developed a partnership with Owens Community College and our Prevention Specialist began working with their athletes. Five staff members completed certification in Green Dot, as did the BGSU and Owens Community College institutions. Green Dot is an evidence-based prevention model that empowers bystanders to prevent domestic and sexual violence on campus. The Cocoon has participated with BGSU in training faculty and staff on the Green Dot model and played an instrumental role in assisting with implementation of the model on campus.

Outreach

The Cocoon is working to develop relationships with area colleges, universities and secondary school systems to create community-wide programming opportunities. Throughout the year, The Cocoon coordinates activities such as The Wood County Clothesline Project and What Were You Wearing. We also support Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month and Domestic Violence Awareness Month to name a few. Working with civic groups, fraternities, sororities and other organizations, our staff and volunteers raise awareness of the impact of domestic and sexual violence locally, the life-long impact it has on those who are abused or witness abuse, and how we can all be a part of the social change needed to stop the cycle of violence.

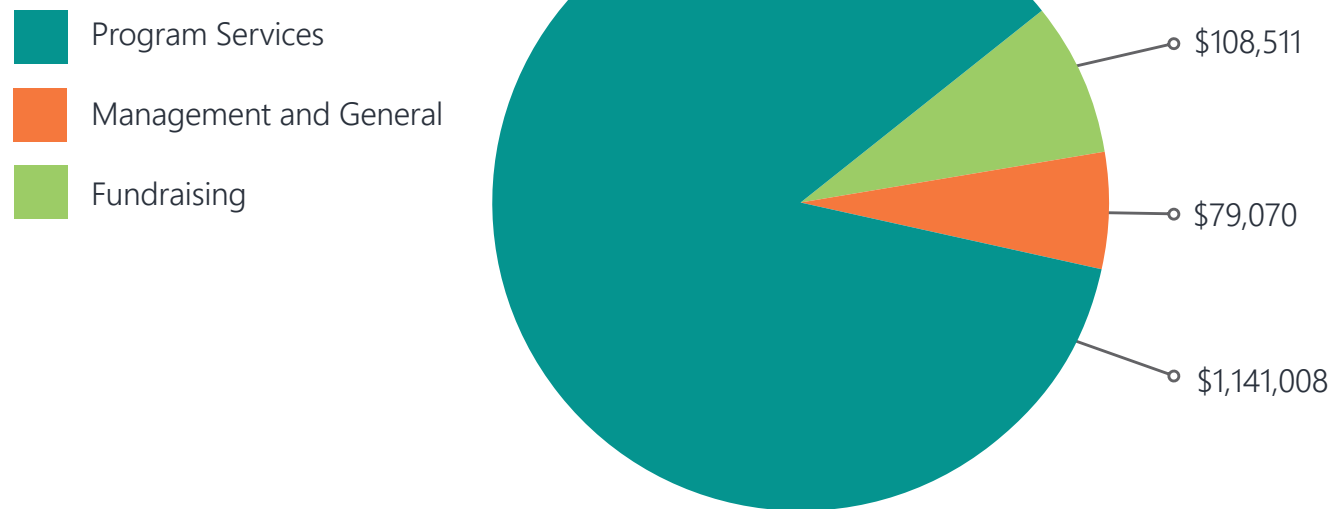
FINANCIALS

Income



The Cocoon is a 501(c)3 organization.

Expenses



INVESTING IN A SAFER TOMORROW

The Cocoon has experienced a lot of growth in the last 15 years. In this short time, we have become Wood County's only comprehensive domestic and sexual violence agency offering holistic programming to shelter residents and those living within the community.

Each year, more survivors reach out for assistance as they navigate finding safety for themselves and their children. In 2020, The Cocoon served 747 survivors, more than any other year in our history, with survivors reporting increased frequency and severity in violence. At the same time, The Cocoon suffered a \$185,000 reduction in Victims of Crime Act funds that support our services.

With the assistance of State Capital Budget funds, The Cocoon finalized Phase II of our building renovations, including:

- Private office space for advocates to meet with survivors
- Group room where we can host our weekly support group
- Teen Respite Room for teens staying in shelter to have a space to socialize
- Upgraded interior and exterior building security
- New HVAC system
- New roof

We also launched an upgraded, more user-friendly website, revised our logo to include a teal element that represents sexual assault survivors, and developed new marketing materials with updating branding and consistent messaging.

Beyond 2021, our long-term plans include increased onsite counseling services, onsite AA groups, increased youth programming, community-wide prevention programming, economic empowerment expansion and the addition of a housing and youth advocate.

We will begin Phase III of our renovations, which will complete the interior of the agency and bring the building up to current ADA standards. We will be adding a reception area, a private training room that can be utilized by Cocoon staff and partner agencies, plus more private office space for advocates and administrative staff.

It is more critical than ever that The Cocoon has the capacity to meet the needs of survivors in our community. We're dedicated to continuing to provide life-saving services, including 24/7 access to an advocate, safety planning, trauma supports and more. Our community partners are instrumental in helping us remain of beacon of hope for survivors in Wood County and beyond.

We look forward to taking this journey with you and providing our community with state-of-the-art facilities and services.



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